



Front Country Trails
Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force

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Regular Meeting
Wednesday, July 1, 2009
5:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers
735 Anacapa Street, 2nd Floor, Santa Barbara

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Acting Chair Perkins called the regular meeting of the Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force to order at 5:30 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 735 Anacapa Street, 2nd Floor.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Task Force Member Emmens

ROLL CALL: Task Force Members Present:

Suzanne Perkins	County Park Commissioner 1st District
Judith Dale	County Park Commissioner 3rd District
Beebe Longstreet	City Park & Recreation Commissioner
W. Scott Burns	City Park & Recreation Commissioner
Bruce Emmens	Public Use & Facilities Staff Officer Los Padres National Forest
Jeff Bensen	District Recreation Officer Los Padres National Forest

City of Santa Barbara Staff Present

Nancy Rapp	Parks and Recreation Director
Kathy Frye	Associate Park/Natural Areas Planner
Karla Megill	Executive Assistant

County of Santa Barbara Staff Present

Erik Axelson	County Parks Deputy Director
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Los Padres National Forest Staff Present

Kerry Kellogg	Wilderness and Trails Manager, Santa Barbara Ranger District
Kyle Kinports	Assistant Recreation Officer, Santa Barbara Ranger District

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS: Mr. Axelson introduced the two new Task Force members: Judith Dale, representing the County of Santa Barbara Park Commission and Scott Burns, City Park and Recreation Commissioner.

Ms. Dale and Mr. Burns highlighted their background and experience.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR: With the rotation off the Task Force of Chair Steve Forsell, Vice Chair Perkins assumed the acting chairmanship until such time as the members conducted elections to fill vacancies. The following actions were taken:

Motion:

Task Force members Longstreet/Dale that Perkins serve as Chair of the Task Force.

Vote:

Unanimous voice vote

Motion:

Task Force members Emmons/Perkins that Longstreet serve as Vice Chair of the Task Force.

Vote:

Unanimous voice vote

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA – None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Speakers: Chris Orr and Jim Childress

TASK FORCE AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

1. Front Country Trails Affected by the Jesusita Fire – For Information

Speakers:

- Staff: Kerry Kellogg, Wilderness and Trails Manager, Santa Barbara Ranger District
- Members of the Public: Jim Hickling, Maryanne Buds, Chris Orr, Gregg Hall

Task Force Comments:

- Task Force Member Dale asked whether there are plans to re-seed the areas. She said she understands there could be another El Niño this winter, which could be a disaster and asked if there are mitigation plans.
 - Mr. Kellogg replied saying that the Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) team report looks at values at risk, including the trails and downstream properties. Mr. Kellogg said that the BAER team has identified mitigation measures and some funding primarily to protect the trail for when the rains come. Mr. Kellogg said he is unsure of hydro-seeding plans, but believes the reports states, at least for Forest

Service System lands that there will be limited hydro-mulching in the areas above Highway 154.

- Task Force Member Dale asked whether there was less damage to the trails or potential damage from rains due to the Jesusita fire than from the Gap fire.
 - Mr. Kellogg said the Gap fire area does not have any recognized trails, and the hydro-mulching would function to reduce erosion. He said the only mitigation measure other than mulching, that would help the trails, would be building water drainage features on the trails to get the water off.
 - Ms. Rapp added that the City and County Public Works Departments are meeting on a weekly basis and working collaboratively to come up with plans to mitigate potential damage. She said the biggest concern is the threat of flooding and mudslides. Ms. Rapp further said that the Forest Service has been involved as well.
- Task Force Member Burns asked when parts of trails will be re-opened.
 - Mr. Kellogg replied that staff is recommending to open Rattlesnake, West Fork of Cold Spring, the San Roque portion of Jesusita Trail to Inspiration Point. He said that although the trail on the Tunnel side is adequate for use, staff recommends some additional minor work. Staff is sensitive to the parking situation on the bottom and may keep it closed for the short-term. Mr. Kellogg advised that staff recognizes the importance of publicizing the fact that the trails aren't the same any more; as there is no shade and vegetation. Mr. Kellogg said the remaining trails will be impacted, and off-trail use is unacceptable and is a major concern.
 - Mr. Axelson emphasized the importance of not interfering with ongoing demolition and reconstruction efforts, and restoration of utility services, in Mission Canyon.
- Task Force Member Burns asked whenever the first rain comes, how soon will staff be able to revisit what should be done.
 - Mr. Kellogg stated staff recognizes that if heavy rains are experienced, the trails will change enormously. He indicated that future trail closures are a reality.
- Chair Perkins commented that if Rattlesnake, West Fork, and the San Roque portion of Jesusita Trail to Inspiration, are opened, there needs to be a lot of consideration before opening Tunnel Trail.
- Chair Perkins asked whether "Trail Closed" signage is available for posting at Tunnel.
 - Mr. Axelson said that signs are currently posted on Tunnel Road indicating that the trailhead is closed. Additionally, he said that the County Board of Supervisors recently voted to implement a temporary "No Parking" zone along much of Tunnel Road where parking had been an issue. He said the combination of closing the trailhead and the imposition of the temporary, "No Parking" zone, will help to keep the Trail closed. Mr. Axelson said he anticipates a minimum of a two-month closure of that trail.

- Chair Perkins said that if the Tunnel Trail is going to remain closed the public needs to be made aware that it is closed and the reason for the closure.
- Task Force Member Longstreet commented that she believes trail closure is a technical staff decision; staff knows the condition of the trails and the issues. Ms. Longstreet said that if staff is closing the trails, they are doing so for safety reasons.

OLD BUSINESS

2. Status Report on FCT Management Recommendations Implementation – For Information (Attachment 1)

Recommendation: That Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force receives a status report on implementation of the FCT Management Recommendations.

Documents:

- Staff Report
- Staff PowerPoint Presentation

Speakers:

- Staff: Erik Axelson, County Parks Deputy Director; Kerry Kellogg, Assistant Recreation Officer, Santa Barbara Ranger District
- Members of the Public: Jim Hickling

Task Force Comments:

- Task Force Member Dale asked who chooses the Coordinator, the Task Force or Staff.
- Task Force Member Perkins stated she would like the Coordinator to be a fresh person, someone who has no prior affiliation or allegiance with the City, County, or the Forest Service. She said she thinks it is important for the three agencies to come to a consensus rather than the majority rule.
- Task Force Member Emmens commented that the Task Force recommended that an Inter-agency Agreement be developed and the Front Country Coordinator position be established. He said the Inter-agency Agreement deals with establishing that position as well, so it is an inter-agency staff decision in bringing the person on board. He further said that it will be staff that chooses the person and lays out the work in line with the recommendations that have come forward from the Task Force and adopted by the agencies.
- Task Force Member Longstreet said that she understands comments by Chair Perkins on neutrality, but the individual needs to have passion. She further said the person hired should not be someone who it will take a lot of time to come up to speed. Ms. Longstreet stated there are plenty of passionate people who she believes can rise above previous allegiances. She said a coalition is being created, and the Coordinator will not be working for any one agency, but all three, to serve the public.

- Chair Perkins said she does not believe there is one organization capable of doing what needs to be done. She said she is hopeful that in the future, staff, in working with the stakeholders, will be able to get a new organization that will be able to step in and do the job as an umbrella organization.
- Task Force Member Longstreet agrees voluntary trail use guidelines are needed, but two fires have changed perspectives on trail maintenance. She said she wants to see volunteers utilized if they are ready and willing to go. Ms. Longstreet said it is important to keep moving forward. She said that the recommendations were made before the budget crisis, so it will take more time to implement them, but she urged patience.
- Chair Perkins commented that she does not want to see the emphasis placed on establishing an official umbrella organization when there are a lot of groups willing to step in.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Trail Maintenance Update – For Information (Attachment 2)

Recommendation: That Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force receives a status report on FCT trail maintenance projects.

Documents:

- Staff Report

Speakers:

- Staff: Kerry Kellogg, Assistant Recreation Officer, Santa Barbara Ranger District

Task Force Comments:

- Task Force Member Longstreet liked the booklet “Conducting a Successful Volunteer Trail Project”
- Task Force Member Bensen commented that it is good to see all the volunteers come out.
- Task Force Member Dale asked if it would be appropriate for UCSB students to get involved in this volunteer effort.
 - o Mr. Kellogg said to direct people to the Santa Barbara Trails Council, which has an established volunteer organization agreement with the Forest Service.
- Chair Perkins asked regarding the Agreement for Sponsored Volunteer Services, whether the Forest Service is open to doing this for multiple organizations.
 - o Mr. Kellogg said a key factor is for a sponsor to have insurance. He said they are also open to doing it for multiple organizations. He further said they also have an individual volunteer agreement, under the authority of the District Ranger. Mr. Kellogg said that when the Forest Service has an agreement with a volunteer, they are considered employees of the government.

4. Universal Trail Assessment Process and Trails Survey Project – For Action (Attachment 3)

Recommendation: That the Front Country Trails (FCT) Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force receives a presentation regarding the Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) and concurs with the recommendation to develop and implement a Trails Survey Project with either volunteers or Beneficial Designs.

Documents:

- Staff Report
- Staff PowerPoint Presentation

Speakers:

- Staff: Kathy Frye, Associate Park/Natural Areas Planner; Michelle Smith, California State Parks
- Members of the Public: Stephen Doherty, Dorothy Littlejohn, Otis Kaleff, Jim Childress, Lynn Kirst, Jim Hickling, Ray Ford, Michelle Smith

In response to public comment, Task Force members commented on the frequency of task force meetings, the role of staff, and coordination between staff and stakeholders.

Task Force Comments:

- Task Force Member Longstreet said she likes the idea of getting an objective company to do the survey. She said it will be good to get a baseline before the rains; staff will only be collecting data. Ms. Longstreet said the survey will provide the tools to make better decisions. She said there will be plenty of work for volunteers to do after the baseline data is gathered. She expressed concern about funding and asked staff whether funding has been addressed. Ms. Longstreet said she supports it.
- Task Force Member Bensen asked why staff is waiting until October to contract with Beneficial Designs.
 - Ms. Frye said staff still has to determine the final parameters.
- Task Force Member Benson commented that UTAP is a computer system used to get baseline data and continue to get data on trail features and structures. He asked if there is support from Beneficial Designs after the work is done or are there additional costs.
- Task Force Member Emmens encouraged staff and the Task Force to consider comments from the volunteers which indicate that they do not want to do the work. He said that more objective results would be achieved by using a single source to collect the data. Mr. Emmens stated that the Trail Assessment is the number one task in the trail maintenance and management area of the recommendations. He said to think it will take another nine months for volunteers to complete the work does not make any sense.

Motion:

Task Force members Burns/Longstreet that the Task Force concur with the staff recommendation to complete the UTAP certification with interim parameters and move forward with developing a Trails Survey Project with Beneficial Designs.

Task Force Member Longstreet expressed appreciation for all the people who went through the training and encouraged staff to utilize the volunteers for the extra information needed after the baseline survey.

Vote:

Unanimous voice vote

5. Set Meeting Schedule for 2009 – For Action (Attachment 4)

Recommendation: That Front Country Trails Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force set a meeting schedule for 2009.

Documents:

- Staff Report

Speakers:

- Staff: Erik Axelson, County Parks Deputy Director

Motion:

Task Force members Longstreet/Emmens to accept the staff recommendation for the 2009 quarterly meeting schedule.

Vote:

Unanimous voice vote

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:06 p.m., with no further business to come before the Task Force,

Motion:

Task Force members Longstreet/Emmens to adjourn the meeting.

Vote:

Unanimous voice vote

Respectfully submitted,

Erik Axelson
County Parks Deputy Director